



SMC Harrisburg Lobbying Trip Report, June 13th, 14th, and 15th By Eileen Anderson, Director, Government Relations

The purpose of this whirlwind trip was to distribute SMC's 2017 State Position Papers and speak with lawmakers about SMC's top agenda items before the House and Senate pass the 2017-18 budget and vote on any legislation riding along with the with budget. Once the budget is passed lawmakers will depart for summer recess.

Several of SMC's issues have seen action recently; state pension reform, regulations, and workforce development. Other issues are longer term but it always pays to bring them to the attention of lawmakers and keep them on their agenda.

In each office SMC presented 2017 State Position Papers and explained our viewpoint. We positioned SMC as a corporate executive looking at PA as a possible location for a business. What assets does a corporate executive see? What does a corporate executive see as problems? What are potential solutions?

Most of the meetings touched on the following issues:

- **Health Care Costs:**
 - **Surprise balance billing and the need for more robust provider networks.** While surprise balance billing is not a huge issue in south west PA now it may become one when the UPMC/Highmark consent decree expires on 6/30/19. The networks are too narrow and patients are forced to use out-of-network providers
 - **Reauthorization and modernization of the PA Health Care Cost Containment (PHC4).** A modernized agency that can collect claims data is becoming a necessity as more and more employees and individuals face higher premiums and deductibles.
- **Regulatory Reform** – We pointed out the need for reform and to illustrate it mentioned that SMC has heard from members who say they will never build another building in PA because of layer upon layer of state, federal and local regulations.
- **Workforce Development** – There is a critical need to train a young workforce in the skilled trades. SMC has heard from members who say that they have job openings that are difficult to fill.
- **Minimum wage** – This turned out to be a non-issue even though Governor Wolf called for an increase to \$12.00/per hour effective July 1, 2017 in his February budget address.

Regarding position paper distribution metrics, including those papers delivered on May 8th on the Harrisburg Grassroots Lobbying Trip, SMC has now placed our papers in the hands of 123 lawmakers, nearly half of the 253 members of the House and Senate. The area covered includes Mercer over to York County.

Meetings were held with the following lawmakers and staff:

- Rep. Brian Ellis, Republican Chair, Commerce Committee
- Tom Lebo, Counsel, (Senator Jay Costa, Jr., Democratic Floor Leader)
- Elise Argall, Legislative Director, (Senator Guy Reschenthaler)
- Rich Pronesti, Executive Director, (Rep. Rob Matzie, Chair, SW Democratic Caucus)
- Christine Verdier, Chief of Staff, (Senator David Argall, Chair, Republican Policy Committee)
- Rep. Bryan Barbin
- Rep. Justin Walsh
- Rep. Ryan Warner
- Rep. Bryan Cutler, Republican Whip & Jordan Gouker, Executive Director
- Rep. Kerry Benninghoff, Chair, Republican Policy Committee
- Eric Kratz, Executive Director, (Senator Kim Ward, Republican Chair, Labor & Industry Committee)
- Ranee Gardell, Assistant, (Senator Jim Brewster)
- Abdoul Barry & Dan Green, Dir. and Deputy Dir. of Legislative Affairs, PA Insurance Dept.
- Jim Donahue, Senior Counsel to the Attorney General, and 4 others, Office of the Attorney General
- Kristin Crawford, Legislative Director and 5 others, PA Department of Revenue
- Matt Hilliard, Counsel, (Rep. Dave Reed, Republican Floor Leader)
- Cheryl Schriener, Chief of Staff, (Senator Elder Vogel, Jr.)
- Scott Sikorsky, Director of Legislation and Policy,* (Senator Jake Corman, Republican Floor Leader) (*Email correspondence)
- Jon Humma, Legislative Director, (Senator John DiSanto)
- Rep. Daryl Metcalfe, Republican Chair, State Government
- Sean Ramaley, Deputy Secretary, Safety & Labor-Management Relations, Dept. of Labor & Industry